

**TRANSLATION OF
NOTICE OF REJECTION**
(First Official Action)

Drafting Date: July 8, 2010

Mailing Date: July 13, 2010

Examiner: Umi Satoh

Japanese Patent Application No. 2006-521216

The captioned application is deemed to be rejected due to the following reason. Should the applicant have its opinion thereagainst, however, a written opinion has to be submitted within 3 months from the mailing date.

REASON (Inventive Step)

The claims below of the application are deemed to be easily conceivable by those skilled in the art on the basis of the following publications circulated prior to the filing date of the application (the Convention date), therefore unpatentable in line with the provision of Art. 29(2) of the Patent Law.

Documents cited

D1: JP57177144A (corresponding to GB2100453)

D2: JP62130321U

D3: JP2002147802A (corresponding to EP1338852)

D4: JP2001349585A

Note:

Claims 1 to 45/D1 to D4

D1 discloses an exposure device having an N₂ gas supply source 11 and a humidifier 16 (especially, page 1, right column, last line to page 2, right column, first line and Figs. 2 and 3).

As disclosed in D2 (especially, Claim 1 and Figs. 1 and 2), D3 (especially, paragraphs [0004] to [0010] and Fig. 5) and D4 (especially, paragraph [0008] and Fig. 1), a humidifier having hollow fiber is well known. Therefore, use of the humidifier having hollow fiber in place of the humidifier 16 of D1 could be easily conceivable.

The form of the hollow fiber and the structure of the humidifier would have been technical matters that an artisan could appropriately determine. Moreover, purification of N₂ gas according to need would not have needed special difficulty.

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